

(Washington, DC)— Today Congresswoman Gwen Moore submitted the following statement to the Congressional Record:

“Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act.

“Today we are reauthorizing critical components of the Voting Rights Act that will ensure that all citizens can carry out the fundamental right to vote and have the opportunity to elect their candidate of choice.

“I know there has been push back from certain colleagues about certain provisions, such as the language assistance provision. I wanted to remind everyone that these are all U.S. citizens that are helped by this provision and a majority of the people who will benefit from these language assistance services are native born citizens.

“It’s not only citizens of Spanish-speaking heritage or Asian Americans, we are also talking about American Indians and Alaskan natives. These are people whose ancestors were here long before yours or mine and deserve every assistance possible when it comes to voting.

“Today, as we consider the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, let us reflect on our ancestors and those who dedicated their lives toward civil rights causes, such as Fannie Lou Hammer, Rosa Parks, Coretta Scott King and her husband Dr. Martin Luther King.

“Dr. King led the symbolic voting rights march from Selma, Alabama to the capital city of Montgomery, which motivated Lyndon Johnson to push Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some of the provisions in the Voting Rights Act itself were first outlined in a March 14, 1965 article in The New York Times written by Dr. King.

“In his speech after the Selma to Montgomery March, Dr. Martin Luther King said:

“Let us march on ballot boxes, march on ballot boxes until race-baiters disappear from the political arena. Let us march on ballot boxes until we send to our city councils, state legislatures, and the U.S. Congress men (and women) who will not fear to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly [with thy God]. Let us march on ballot boxes until brotherhood (and sisterhood) becomes more than a meaningless word in our opening prayer.’

“The Voting Rights Act empowers us to confront the deceitful tactics used to undermine minority voters.

“The Voting Rights Act empowers us to seek justice and support the policies in which we believe.

“The Voting Rights Act empowers us to achieve the true definition of democracy, and ensure that every American has the right to vote.

“In memory of the many great civil rights leaders that have passed on and in unity with many of the great ones to come, I urge my colleagues to pass the Voting Rights Act and reject any amendments that undermine this monumental bill.”

###